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I. Information and statistics on the Lao People's Democratic Republic

A. Special points of the country, population, economy, and society of the Lao PDR

Country and population

1. The Lao PDR is situated in Southeast Asia, has a total land area of 236,800 km^2, and borders the People's Republic of China to the north, the Kingdom of Cambodia to the south, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the east, the Kingdom of Thailand to the west, and the Union of Myanmar to the northwest. The Lao nation falls among the ancient nations of the region and of the world. The Lao nation and people have been undergoing a steady and expanding evolutionary process for a long time. In the 14th Century, the Lao national hero Prince Fa Ngum led the Lao people in battle and drove the Kingdom of Lane Xang to prosperity. Lao history tells that the Lao nation was dominated and colonized by foreign countries for almost one and a half centuries. During the 20th Century, however, especially following World War II, the multiethnic Lao people rose up valiantly to fight for the National Democratic Revolution to liberate the nation from its former old- and modern-style colonialism. On 2 December 1975, the National Democratic Revolution was victorious and the Lao people finally won full national independence and established the Lao nation — the Lao People's Democratic Republic — on the foundation that it would have the right to determine its own fate. Ever since then, the multiethnic Lao people have seized possession of their independent and sovereign nation, a nation which is a respected member of the international community. Laos has been a member of the United Nations (UN) dating back to 1955 and after 1975, has continued to honor its obligations under the UN Charter and worked actively in the international arena towards peace, stability, justice, and cooperation for development in our world.

2. War with foreign aggressors has taken its toll on the lives and assets of the multiethnic people and had a heavy impact of the farmland and mountainous forest land used for foraging. 25% of the country is littered with unexploded ordinance (UXOs). Between 1964 and 2008, a total of 50,000 people have fallen victim to UXOs, of whom 30,000 died and 20,000 survived, 13,500 becoming disabled. These victims included women and children. The repercussions of the war, especially these UXOs, have become a major obstacle for the Lao people and socio-economic development and constitute a cause underlying the underdevelopment and poverty of the Lao multiethnic people.

3. Following the liberation of the nation, the primary duty of the Lao government was to repair the injuries sustained during the war and to lead the multiethnic Lao people in restoring the national economy, which had been heavily affected by over half a century of war, and in developing the nation according to the objectives of the National Socio-Economic Development Plans (NSEDPs) for each period in order that the material and psychological wellbeing of the people may be gradually improved. Towards the end of the 80s, the government of the Lao PDR implemented a policy of transition from a planned economy to a State-regulated market economy. In 1991, the 2nd Legislature of the People's Supreme Assembly approved the Constitution of the Lao PDR to function as a reference for the management of the State and the people based on the principles of law.

4. The system of governance of the Lao PDR is divided into 18 provinces and 1 capital. The capital and each of the provinces are divided into a total of 143 districts nationwide. Each district is divided into village clusters and villages, amounting to 8,293 villages across the country. Each province has a provincial governor and the Vientiane Capital has its own governor. Districts also have district governors while villages have village chiefs. These people lead the governance at their respective levels. The provincial governors and Vientiane Capital Governor are appointed by the National President, the district governors by the Prime Minister, and the village chiefs by the people of their villagers based on the right of the people to make decisions over their own issues. The capital, provinces, and districts have departments and offices which make up a vertically

and horizontally structured organizational network with the departments and offices of a given specialized sector operating under the relevant ministries and organizations. Administrative hierarchy runs from the provincial governors and Vientiane Capital Governor down to the district governors.

5. According to the 2005 Census of Population and Housing, the Lao PDR has a total population of 5.62 million, of whom 2.82 million are female and 2.80 million male, males accounting for almost 50%, which would make for equal proportions. If compared to the 1995 Census of Population and Housing, this shows a rise of 1.04 million people, equivalent to 2.1% per year. Average population density is 25 people per square kilometer, the most densely populated areas being the plains along the Mekong river and its tributaries. The population is generally young with approximately 50% being under the age of 20 years but the proportion of the population under the age of 15 years has fallen from 44% to 39% since 1995 and the proportion men and women of working age has risen to a certain extent **(see Table 1)**.

Table 1
Natural population growth from 1995 to 2005

Growth between the two censuses		*Expected births, deaths, and natural population growth between the two surveys*				
Number of people (in thousands)	*Annual growth rate*	*Births (in thousands)*	*Deaths (in thousands)*	*Natural population growth (in thousands)*	*Expected net migration (in thousands)*	*Annual rate of natural population growth (percentage)*
991	2.5					
1 047	2.1	1 775	590	1 185	-138	2.5

Source: Census of Population and Housing (2005).

Table 2
Population by gender and nationality

	Population			
Nationality	*Female*	*Male*	*Total*	*Percentage*
Lao	2 811 990	2 789 621	5 601 611	99.6
Cambodian	471	508	979	0.0
Chinese	780	1 045	1 825	0.0
Myanmar	73	81	154	0.0
Thai	372	614	986	0.0
Vietnamese	4 473	4 322	8 795	0.2
Other Asian countries	50	77	127	0.0
European countries	78	113	191	0.0
African countries	9	10	19	0.0
American	175	226	401	0.0
Australian	8	8	16	0.0
Other countries	42	42	84	0.0
Unstated	2 910	3 884	6 794	0.1
Total	**2 821 431**	**2 800 551**	**5 621 982**	**100**

Source: Census of Population and Housing (2005).

6. In 1995, the proportion of the population under the age of 15 years was 43% and the proportion of those of working age (15-64 years) was 50%. In 2005, these figures changed to 39% and 57% respectively and in 2015, to 33% and 63%. The fall in the population aged 0-14 years and over 65 years and the rise in the population aged 15-64 years indicates an

increased workforce capacity. The Lao PDR is now half of the way through this demographic benefit, which is expected to last for up to a further 30 years before population starts to age (see Table 3).

Table 3
Ages and genders between 1995 and 2005

	1995 (percentage)			*2005 (percentage)*		
Age group	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
0-14 years	43	45	44	39	40	39
15-65 years	53	51	53	57	56	57
65 years and over	4	4	4	4	4	4
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Census of Population and Housing (2005).

7. Between 1995 and 2005, average longevity rose from 50 to 59 years among men and 52 to 63 years among women with infertility rates falling from 5.6% to 4.6%, the 5.4% rate of women residing in urban areas being greater than that of those residing in rural areas, which is just 2.8%.

8. In the Lao PDR, a given household has an average of 8-10 people because Lao people tend to live with their extended family rather than in nuclear families. The majority of the population currently resides in rural areas but urban populations are rising and not in Vientiane Capital alone but also in other towns and cities while at the same time, economic growth is leading to increased labor migration.

Economy

9. The government of the Lao PDR has been steadily meeting its targets and objectives, evidenced by a number of great achievements, including economic growth, the progress made with State sector financial management, the important reduction in poverty and progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other such targets, the improvements in social standards, the expansion of socio-economic infrastructure, the continued development of institutional and legislative structures, and the significant advances taking place in the management of other economic sectors.

10. The economy of the Lao PDR is based on hidden agricultural production capacities. The Lao PDR is listed among the poorest countries in the world with an average annual income per capita of 1,543 dollars in 2013, compared to 810 in 2008. In 2004, 71% of the population had an income of less than 2 dollars per day and 23% less than 1 dollar per day (World Bank, 2005). Based on the 2005 UN Human Development Report, the Lao PDR was ranked 133rd out of 177 countries. The goal of reducing public poverty has formed the basis for the government's national development efforts over the last 30 or more years and this is shown in the NSEDPs. Most notably, in 2006, at the request of the government, the National Assembly (NA) approved 11 priority programs and 111 projects, which included important programs for reducing public poverty, such as Program 2 (Comprehensive Agricultural Development Program), Program 6 (Household and Community Poverty Reduction Program and Halting Slash and Burn Program), and Program 10 (Human Resource Development Program and Socio-Cultural Development Program). These priority programs form the main components of the NA approved NSEDP for the coming years. According to government assessments, in 2013, 8.11% of all households were classified as poor, which achieved the 7th NSEDP poverty reduction target to bring the figure below 10%. In 2007-2008, national GDP was at 6,435 billion kip.

11. We have seen extremely rapid economic growth thanks to domestic and foreign direct investment (FDI), especially into the mining and hydropower sectors. Agricultural and industrial exports have also played an active part in an increase in service businesses, including tourism. Over the five years covered by the 6th NSEDP, average GDP per capita rose by 7.7% annually, exceeding the 7.5% target for this NSEDP and also the 6.2% target

of the previous NSEDP. The economic structure has been evolving and developing in accordance with the policies and targets specified in the plans to achieve diverse and sustainable production while gradually industrializing and modernizing the economy.

12. Especially over recent years, GDP has continued to enjoy strong growth thanks to the achievements made and support from an influx of capital flooding into the country and from an expanding bank credit, which reached 7.6% in 2009, just falling short of the 8% target, partly due to the global economic and financial crisis, which affected the Lao PDR. Overall, the main source of growth has been industry, including excavation, construction, processing, and so forth. This sector has grown 12.5% (the target being 13.4%). The services sector has grown 7.7% (the NSEDP target being 9.9%), and agriculture, including food production, crop cultivation, timber products, and fisheries, by 3.1%, coming very close to the target set. For 2010, it is expected that measures will continue to be approved to improve the business climate and support investment to spur a growth of 8%.

13. The economic structure of the Lao PDR is set to undergo changes over the coming years. Agricultural production, which has always accounted for the majority of domestic production, is to fall from 51.9% to 45.5% while industrial production is set to rise from 22.4% to 28.2% and services from 25.7% to 26.4% during the same period. This, in turn, will bring about changes in the labor structure hand-in-hand with the changes taking place in the economic structure, making it more active. The proportion of those employed in the agriculture and forestry sector fell slightly from 78.6% in 2000 to 76.6% in 2006 while those employed in the construction sector rose from 6.9% in 2000 to 7.7% in 2005 with those employed in the services sector rising from 14.5% to 15.6%.

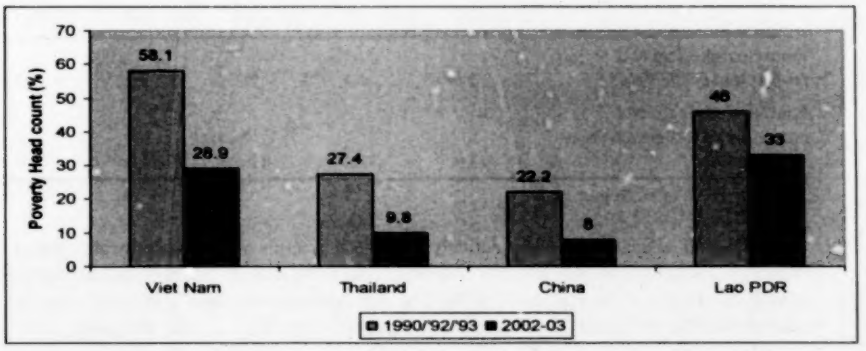
14. The proportion of the population living under the national poverty line was 46% in 1992, 39% in 1997, and 33% in 2002. By 2005, this figure had dropped to 28.7%, falling to 26.9% in 2007-2008, and is expected to fall to 23% in 2010 (see Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4
Proportion of the population with an income of less than 1 dollar per day

Indicator	*1992*	*1997*	*2002*	*2010*
Poverty headcount	46	39	33	23
Poverty gap	11	10	8	
Consumption of poor people	9	8	8	

Sources: LECS1, LECS2, and LECS3.

Table 5
Comparison of poverty eradication in the Lao PDR with other countries



Source: World Bank (2006).

15. Food consumption varies heavily between people of Lao ethnicity and other ethnic groups. In terms of volume, households are still lacking sufficient food for body energy requirements (2,100 calories per day per person) and in terms of quality, people still rely

heavily on basic foods, leading to imbalanced diets. Vegetable oil consumption in rural areas is extremely low. Bush meat and fish are the main source of protein and fat and the volumes consumed varies between households, depending on their actual capacities to obtain it. Generally speaking, there is no regular consumption of meat obtained from livestock — sometimes because people are unable to raise animals and sometimes because of people's daily eating habits — and they need more of certain nutrients, such as vitamin A and iron, in their diets.

16. Following the 10% inflation crisis which arose during the first half of 2008 due to the spike in food and crude oil prices, the consumer price index (CPI) began to fall steadily, almost reaching zero in April 2009, which had a negative impact on the transport sector and on people's diets.

Education

17. The government of the Lao PDR is working hard to implement its education development policies and the Decree on Compulsory Primary Education in order to build the Lao people into good citizens with revolutionary ethics, knowledge, and competencies in the five foundations — moral development, intellectual stimulation, artistic education, physical training, and skills/labor development. The State and society as a whole are working actively to develop a high quality national education system and create opportunities and conditions for everyone to receive an education, especially those residing in remote rural areas, ethnic groups, women, children, disabled persons, and the disadvantaged. The State promotes and supports private investment into national education development and allows the opening of private schools which follow the national curriculum. The State and the public are working together to build schools of all levels to make the education system complete and focusing heavily on expanding inclusive education nationwide.

18. Education is an important priority in the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) and the government has policies in place for improving access to education and reducing illiteracy among disabled persons. By focusing budgets and continuing to increase spending on education (see Table 6), the government is continuing its implementation of it Education Strategic Vision for up until 2020 and the Education for All National Plan of Action (EFA-NPA). The national education system is composed of education in schools, non-formal education (NFE), and inclusive education. Education in schools is divided into five levels — early childhood education, primary education, secondary education, medium level vocational education, and higher education.

Table 6
Government education spending

	2005-2006	*2006-2007*	*2007-2008*	*2008-2009*	*2009-2010*
Education spending as a proportion of GDP (%)	3.6	1.4	2.3	3.2	3.2
Education spending as a proportion of total government spending (%)	13.9	7.2	11.0	14.0	15.0

Source: 2008 MDG Report.

19. Overall, education has been actively developed in terms of both quantity and quality. Primary schools have been built and repaired in remote rural areas and nationwide primary school coverage has now reached 94%. The net primary education enrolment rate has reached 91.6%, the gross lower-secondary enrolment rate 62.7%, and the gross upper-secondary enrolment rate 36.8%. The proportion of six-year-olds enrolled in ordinary education is 86%, the literacy rate of persons aged 15 years and over is 77.09%, compared to a 73% public literacy rate in 2005. There are 1,123 nurseries and kindergartens, 8,871 primary schools, 1,125 secondary schools (722 lower-secondary schools, 35 upper-secondary schools, and 368 complete secondary schools), 39 technical and vocational colleges, and a total of 152 private and State sector higher education institutes and

universities. Together with this, there are three special schools (for disabled children) in Luang Prabang province, Vientiane Capital, and Savannakhet operating under the management of the Ministry of Health (MoH) with 22 teachers (17 women) and 183 disabled children (74 girls), of whom 121 are deaf-mute (50 girls) and 62 have eye disabilities (24 girls). The Center for Medical Rehabilitation (CMR) has the duty of examining and diagnosing the disabilities of children aged 0-18 years and has so far dealt with 207 cases (108 girls). The provision of education to disabled persons through the operation and management of schools for disabled children remains under MoH management and with respect to technical matters, cooperation takes place with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) at the request of the MoH. Plans for the building of three special schools and education centers in the three regions (northern, central, and southern) are still at the feasibility study stage.

20. The Lao government pays great attention to and has special policies in place to promote education among ethnic minorities and ethnic groups residing in remote locations by building ordinary ethnic primary and secondary schools in all provinces across the country in order that ethnic students may have the chance to study at these schools. There are currently 20 ethnic boarding schools nationwide with a total of 7,034 students. Furthermore, there are 4,569 children with special needs who are enrolled in inclusive education.

Public health

21. The government pays great attention to expanding the health network at both central and local levels, especially at grassroots level. Villages and village clusters are the targets of health services. Together with this, the private health network is also being supported and expanding rapidly. Medicines produced domestically now cover 48% of total demand.

22. The MoH has been accelerating its immunization project for mothers and children, which has now achieved a coverage of 71%. Health education and promotion, especially on nutrition, is being focused at local levels. Furthermore, health workers have continued to receive theoretical and practical training, including training in medical ethics. We are approaching the final stages of the process to build the National Strategy for Human Resources for Health for up until 2020. In addition, public health services have seen regular expansion and are gradually achieving greater coverage in rural and remote areas. There are now 775 health centers and 5,668 medicine bags for remote villages located far from the nearest hospital or health center. Furthermore, 77% of the population has access to clean water and 50% of households have their own toilets. Approximately 37% of children under the age of 5 years are underweight. Chronic malnutrition or stuntedness affects 40% of children under the age of 5 years.

23. Despite having fallen, the maternal and child mortality rates remain high, primarily due to limited access to suitable medical services, especially in remote areas. Nonetheless, the maternal mortality ratio dropped from 656 per 100,000 births in 1995 to 580 in 2000 and then to 405 in 2005 with the child mortality rate dropping from 530 per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 405 in 2005. Maternal mortalities mostly occur during or soon after childbirth. The doctor-assisted birth rate has increased and doctors have been trained to deal with emergency birth situations and newborn care. Between 1994 and 2005, the doctor-assisted birth rate increased by less than 5 points and steps forward in the access to and use of birth equipment for care to be provided to pregnant women remain sluggish (28.5%). Child pregnancies remain prevalent in rural areas where access to services for rescuing lives in emergency pregnancy situations is low (see Tables 7 and 8).

Table 7
Child mortality rates

	1995	*2000*	*2005*	*Estimated figure for 2015*
Under-5 mortality rate	170	107	98	80
Infant mortality rate	104	82	70	49
Child immunization rate	68	60	69	90

Source: 2008 MDG Report.

Table 8
Maternal mortality ratio

	1995	*2000*	*2005*	*Estimated figure for 2015*
Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births	650	530	405	260
Proportion on births attended by skilled birth personnel	14 (1994)	17	23	50

Source: 2008 MDG Report.

24. The Lao PDR has laid out the following targets for health sector development to improve on certain figures — the newborn mortality rate to fall to 45 per 1,000 live births, the under-5 mortality rate to fall to 70 per 1,000 live births, the maternal mortality ratio to fall to 260 per 100,000 live births, average longevity to reach 64 years, access to clean water to reach 80%, and access to household toilets to reach 60% (see Table 9). Together with this, the health sector has also set forth some priorities for the coming years — to heavily promote and expand model hygiene villages, to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates and gradually increase child survival rates, to heavily promote good nutrition together with readiness to combat natural disasters and epidemics and the project to improve the development of human resources and raise the quality of services, to make sustainable investments into the sector and mobilize and make effective use of external resources, and to ensure high quality practitioners of traditional medicine and food and drug safety.

Table 9
Proportion of the population with sustainable access to clean water

	1990	*1995*	*2000*	*2007*	*Estimated figure for 2015*
Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source (%)	28		52	74	80
Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility (%)		29	37	49	60

Source: 2008 MDG Report.

Labor and job generation

25. The government of the Lao PDR pays great attention to the development of occupational skills, the enforcement of labor regulations, and promoting vocations and employment for the public, with special priority being given to the rights of disabled persons and to protecting the legitimate rights and interests of workers. Lao workers, without discrimination by gender, age, or social class, receive improved working conditions, health and safety assurances, and work which is well suited to their age group and skills and are generally remunerated at more or less equal rates of pay. In the Lao PDR, there is a total unemployment rate of 1.3 of the working population nationwide.

26. The implementation of policies to open up to investment has led to increased employment for those seeking it. There is now a workforce of over 100,000 people trained in technical or vocational skills. The government pays great attention to developing the occupational skills of the public by building and permitting the private sector to build technical and vocational training centers, of which there are now a total of 153, 61 being State sector and 92 being private sector.

27. During the vast economic growth which has taken place over the last two decades, non-agricultural sectors have been generating considerable revenues. Sectors which generate plenty of jobs and/or require technical expertise have not grown equally. The overall labor structure has therefore not changed all that much with 80% still employed in agriculture and associated sectors simply as a means of making ends meet (see Tables 10

and 11). The labor structure — in terms of economic sectors — has been actively transformed in line with the economic structure and the industrialization and modernization which have been taking place. The proportion of the workforce employed in agriculture and forestry has dropped slightly from 78.5% in 2005 to 75.1% in 2010, the proportion employed in industry and construction has risen from 4.8% to 5.5%, and the proportion employed in services from 16.7% in 2005 to 19.5% in 2010 (Table 12). The annual rate of migration of labor from agriculture into non-agricultural sectors is at approximately 0.7% with more workers migrating into the services sector than into industry.

Source: Calculations based on the 2005 Population and Housing Census.

Table 11
Percentage of the population aged 15-64 participating in the workforce

	1995			*2005*				
	Total	*Urban*	*Rural*	*Total*	*Urban*	*Rural*	*Rural with road access*	*Rural without road access*
Women	83.1	61.1	88.1	79.5	64.2	86.4	85.5	88.5
Men	83.5	69.8	86.5	81.0	71.	85.9	85.1	87.9
Total	**83.3**	**65.4**	**87.4**	**80.3**	**67.5**	**86.1**	**85.3**	**88.2**

Source: 1995 and 2005 Population and Housing Censuses.

Table 12
Employment in each sector (%)

	1995			*2005*		
	Men	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*
Agriculture	81.3	89.5	85.5	77.8	81.3	79.6
Non-agricultural sectors --	18.7	10.5	14.5	22.2	18.7	20.4
State sector --	9.1	3.2	6.0	8.5	3.8	6.1
Private sector	9.6	7.3	8.5	13.7	14.9	14.3
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 1995 and 2005 Population and Housing Censuses.

Culture

28. The Lao PDR has clear cultural policies which focus on promoting cultural development in order to build Lao society into a society which possesses a civilized mindset. The government pays great attention to preserving the fine national culture by preserving and promoting the priceless cultural traditions of the multiethnic people while at the same time selectively welcoming advanced global cultures. The government goes to great efforts to promote cultural practices, arts and literature, creativity, and the management and preservation of the country's cultural, historical, and natural heritage and ancient artifacts and sites. The Lao PDR has many sites of cultural, historical, and natural heritage, two examples being the city of Luang Prabang and the Vat Phou temple in Champasak, both of which are listed by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites, and there are a number of other historical, cultural, and natural sites currently in the process of being proposed as World Heritage Sites.

29. Together with protection and preservation of our ancient sites and cultural heritage, the cultural practices of the multiethnic people receive broad support. There are now

682,803 households which have been declared *cultural households*, 3,351 *cultural villages*, 85 *cultural village clusters*, and 40 children's culture centers.

30. The government pays great attention to expanding mass media activities to preserve and develop the nation and the mass media has expanded in terms of both quantity and quality with both State and private sector media organizations growing rapidly. Systems to bring the mass media to local grassroots areas have now achieved radio and television coverage throughout almost the entire country. Central and local radio and television stations also broadcast a number of programs in ethnic languages.

II. General framework for protecting and promoting human rights

A. Approval for International Human Rights Standards

31. Of the main UN human rights conventions, the Lao PDR is party to six along with a further two optional protocols — the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Optional CRC Protocols on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, and on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. Of the main UN human rights instruments, the Lao PDR is one of an extremely small number of countries in Asia to sign the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED). Within the spectrum of the protection and promotion of human rights, the Lao PDR is also party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG), the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, the Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, and the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.

32. The Lao PDR is also party to other conventions relating to human rights, such as the 1949 Geneva Conventions on International Humanitarian Law and two of its additional protocols — Protocol I relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts and Protocol II relating to the Protection of Victims on Non-International Armed Conflicts. The Lao PDR is also party to nine of the International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions (numbers 4, 6, 13, 29, 100, 111, 138, 182, and 144) and is in the process of considering the ratification of other core ILO conventions. The Lao PDR is party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. As a country which has felt the repercussions of the damages of war inflicted upon it by foreign countries, the Lao PDR played an important role in the process of creating the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), also being the second country after Norway to sign this convention, and this convention has been ratified by the NA of the Lao PDR. The Lao PDR had the honor of hosting the first ever Meeting of States Parties to the CCM in 2010.

33. The Lao PDR was one of the first countries to ratify the ASEAN Charter, which in Article 14, prescribes the establishment of an ASEAN human rights body. In 2009, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) was established. The Lao PDR has worked actively to perform its duties and obligations under the Terms of Reference (TOR) of this ASEAN human rights body.

34. The Lao government is committed and sincere in its acceptance of the international standards set forth in this convention and in their implementation in harmony with the unique circumstances and realities of the Lao PDR and in full accordance with the principle

of pacta sunt servanda for international laws concerning conventions. The Lao PDR has never ceased or avoided implementation of the human rights conventions to which it is party. A number of laws and pieces of legislation lay out a framework for implementing the principles of human rights consistently with that permitted by the international conventions. These laws and pieces of legislation include the Law on Media, the Law on Unions, the Decree on Religious Practice, the Decree on Social Organizations, the Penal Law, and the Law on Criminal Procedure.

B. General legal framework for the protection and promotion of human rights at national level

35. The Constitution of the Lao PDR specifies the fundamental rights and obligations of citizens in Chapter 4 (Articles 34-51). It is therein specified that "Lao citizens are all equal before the law irrespective of their gender, social status, education, beliefs and ethnic group," (Article 35) and that "Citizens of both genders enjoy equal rights in the political, economic, cultural and social fields and in family affairs," (Article 37). The Constitution of the Lao PDR makes specifications for civil rights, such as the right to vote in elections and stand for election, the right to an education, the right to work, the right to receive medical treatment, the right to rest, the right to freedom of settlement and movement, the right to lodge complaints and petitions and to propose ideas to the relevant State organizations, the right for their bodies, dignity, or residences not to be violated, the right to the freedom to believe in or not believe in a religion, the rights of speech, press, and assembly and to set up associations and to stage demonstrations which are not contrary to the laws, and the rights and freedoms to conduct studies in and to apply advanced sciences, techniques, and technologies, to create artistic and literary works, and to engage in cultural activities which are not contrary to the laws. The rights of aliens and stateless persons are also protected under the laws of the Lao PDR.

36. Over 90 laws have been approved by the NA, among which are laws which relate directly and/or indirectly to the protection and promotion of human rights, such as the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children, the Law on the Development and Protection of Women, the Law on Family, the Law on Lao Nationality, the Law on Handling Petitions, the Penal Law, the Law on Criminal Procedure, the Law on the People's Courts, the Law on the Public Prosecutor, the Law on the Election of the National Assembly, the Law on Labor, the Law on Unions, the Law on Education, the Law on Food, the Law on Health Care, the Law on Media, the Law on the Lao Front for National Construction, and so forth. In addition to the laws issued by the NA, the Lao PDR also has other legislation issued by the National President, the government, ministries, organizations, and local authorities, some of which directly relates to the protection and promotion of human rights, such as the Decree on Religious Practice and the Decree on Social Organizations.

37. In the Lao PDR, there is no National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) as specified in the Paris Principles but the Lao PDR does have human rights mechanisms which are consistent and well suited to the true circumstances of the country. The Lao PDR is looking into the formation of an NHRI by exchanging lessons learned from other countries. The Lao government has set up various national level committees with the duty of promoting and protecting human rights, such as the National Steering Committee on Human Rights Coordination (NSCHRC), the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), the National Commission for the Advancement of Women (NCAW), and the National Commission for Mothers and Children (NCMC). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been set up in the Lao PDR in the form of social and vocational organizations and these include the Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC), the Lao Women's Union (LWU), the Lao Revolutionary Youth Union (LRYU), the Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU), the Veterans' Association, the Lao Bar Association (LBA), the Lao Disabled People's Association (LDPA), vocational organizations, nonprofit organizations (NPOs), and so forth. International NGOs also operate actively in Laos. These organizations are able to understand the true situation concerning the efforts being made to promote and protect human rights within the country. They are able to make suggestions to the abovementioned

instruments to resolve problems of human rights violations. Foreign NGOs operate broadly throughout the Lao PDR and contribute actively to socio-economic development and poverty eradication in the Lao PDR. The Lao PDR currently has 188 foreign NGOs operating in the country. Together with this, the government pays great attention to the creation of legal regulations to manage the activities of NGOs and has issued the Decree on Associations. Having this legal foundation in place creates conditions conducive to the expansion of social organizations in the Lao PDR so that they may contribute to national development, poverty eradication, and respect for human rights in the Lao PDR.

38. For the protection of human rights, the Lao PDR has an instrument established within the NA (the People's Complaints and Nationality Department), the system of the People's Courts, and the Office of the Public Prosecutor. The People's Courts are State judicial bodies with jurisdiction to consider cases of legal violations, including illegal acts committed by administrative organizations which touch upon the rights and dignity of civilians. The Penal Law of the Lao PDR specifies illegal actions which affect civil rights and freedoms (Chapter 3) and under the provisions of this Chapter, actions which affect civil rights and freedoms include illegal coercion, arrest, and detention, the sale and kidnapping of persons, violation of the freedom of speech, press, assembly, or meeting of individuals, violation of a residence, violation of privacy, obstruction of the right to vote in elections and stand for election, and the falsification or destruction of documents in an election are illegal. The 2005 amended version of the Penal Law takes into account the obligations of the Lao PDR under international conventions and includes the additional criminal offences of ethnic discrimination, discrimination against women, and human trafficking.

39. The Lao PDR constantly pays great attention to protecting and promoting the rights and interests of disabled persons through the establishment of the NCPD, which is directly responsible for disseminating information to promote understanding into the various conventions which relate to disabled persons, especially the CRPD, in order that the public may gain an accurate and consistent understanding of their rights and obligations under the Constitution and law and from workshops, seminars, and the celebrations for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and from the mass media. Cooperation and support is also received from international organizations and organizations for disabled persons.

Article 1 — Purpose

40. The purpose of CRPD is in line with the Constitution and related laws of the Lao PDR. The Lao PDR promotes and protects the rights of disabled persons to participate in national construction and development, participate politically and economically both directly and indirectly through, for example, access to health services, education, vocational training, employment, information, and telecommunications in order that they may live with dignity among society.

Article 2 — Definitions

41. A *disabled person* refers to a person who has a physical, psychological, mental, or intellectual impairment or loss of function to an organ or part thereof, extending to their sight, their hearing, and their speech, irrespective of the cause of their disability, which acts as a barrier to daily activities and full participation in social activities. **(Article 2 of the Decree on Persons with Disabilities)**

Article 3 — General principles

42. In order to promote the rights, respect for the human dignity, gender equity, and equality of disabled persons with non-disabled persons and their access to education, health, vocational training, employment, information, telecommunications, and so forth, the

government of the Lao PDR specifies the following general principles in **Article 5 of the Decree on Persons with Disabilities**:

(a) To ensure the right to political, economic, and socio-cultural equality between disabled persons and non-disabled persons;

(b) To ensure the management and implementation of policies for disabled persons take place uniformly nationwide;

(c) To ensure facilities to allow for access to services, public places, information, and telecommunications;

(d) To promote participation of all social sectors in the protection, assistance, and development of disabled persons;

(e) To promote cooperation to secure domestic, regional, and international technical, specialist, and financial assistance;

(f) The abovementioned general principles are consistent with the CRPD and the socio-economic development circumstances of the Lao PDR.

Article 4 — General obligations

43. Activities for disabled persons which are broad and associated with socio-economic development are, for example, related to the education and sports, health, labor and social welfare sectors and other activities. Therefore, since the government ratified the CRPD, it has set up the NCPD and paid great attention to improving legislation which relates to disabled persons to bring it into line with international standards, making amendments to legislation such as the Law on Labor, the Law on Education, the Law on Tax, the Law on Hygiene, Disease Prevention, and Health Promotion, the Law on Construction, the Decree on Persons with Disabilities, the National Strategy and Plan of Action on Inclusive Education, and so forth, to act as a reference for the performance of our obligations under international conventions with a focus on improving the lives and wellbeing of disabled persons so that they are able to cope independently, look after themselves, and gradually empower themselves in accordance with the policies issued by the Party and government.

Article 5 — Equality and non-discrimination

44. In the implementation of policies for the protection and promotion of human rights, the government attaches supreme importance to the principles of prohibiting discrimination and guaranteeing that everyone has equal rights before the law. This is evident from **Article 35 of the Constitution**, which states that "Lao citizens are all equal before the law irrespective of their gender, social status, education, beliefs and ethnic group", and **Article 34**, which states that "Lao citizens are persons who hold Lao nationality as provided by the laws". Lao nationality can be granted by birth, naturalization, and granted on other bases as specified in **Articles 11-14 of the Law on Lao Nationality**. Individuals in the Lao PDR who are not Lao citizens are also protected under **Article 50 of the Constitution** of the Lao PDR, which states that "The rights and freedoms of aliens and stateless persons are protected by the laws of the Lao People's Democratic Republic".

45. The laws of the Lao PDR make the following clear specifications concerning the principles of equality and non-discrimination:

(a) **The Law on the People's Courts, Article 6, Paragraph 1** guarantees equality before the courts, stating that "All Lao citizens are equal before the law and the courts, irrespective of their origin, socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, language, gender, cultural level, occupation, religion, abode, and other [factors]";

(b) **The Penal Law, Article 6** states that "The adjudication of criminal cases shall take place based on the principle that all Lao citizens are equal before the law and the courts, irrespective of their origin, socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, language, gender, religion, cultural level, occupation, abode, and other [factors]. The People's Courts shall

create conditions whereby the people, especially suspects, offenders, and civil defendants may exercise their rights in order to ensure that criminal procedure may take place correctly and objectively";

(c) **The Law on Civil Procedure, Article 3** states that "The courts have the sole right and authority to adjudicate over civil cases and the adjudication of civil cases shall take place based on the principle of equality for all Lao citizens". **Article 6** also makes specification concerning the equality of civilians before the law and the courts, stating that "Civil proceedings must be conducted on the basis that all citizens are equal before the laws and the courts, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, language, educational level, occupation, beliefs, abode, or other [factors].

46. The People's Courts must create conditions whereby Lao citizens, especially civil litigants, may exercise this right to equality in order to ensure that civil procedure may take place objectively and in accurate accordance with fact".

47. The government paid great attention to the creation of the **Decree on Persons with Disabilities**, which specifies equality for disabled persons in **Article 9**, which states that "Disabled persons, irrespective of their gender, age, race, ethnicity, language, beliefs, religion, cause of their disability, and economic, cultural, and social status shall have absolute equality to non-disabled persons before the law. The State applies various measures necessary to the prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination, violence, physical and psychological violation of disabled persons and violations of their dignity". **Article 10** states that "Disabled persons have equal rights in political affairs, such as the right to vote in elections, to stand for election, to participate in activities, to consult and agree on important national issues, and to be appointed to positions of various levels within State and Party organizations, the LFNC, mass organizations, and social organizations as appropriate".

Article 6 — Women with Disabilities

48. The government of the Lao PDR pays great attention to promoting gender roles and equity, including for disabled persons, ratifying the CEDAW in 1981 and appointing the NCAW to represent the government in protecting and promoting the advancement of women. Together with this, in 2004, the Law on the Development and Protection of Women was issued. **Article 8 of the Law on the Development and Protection of Women** makes specification for physical, psychological, educational, vocational, professional, and family development.

49. The government created the Strategic Plan for the Development of Women for 2011-2015 and the National Plan of Action for 2016-2020.

50. **Article 13 of the Decree on Persons with Disabilities specifies equal rights for women with disabilities, stating that** "Women with disabilities shall have equal rights and value to all members of society in their self-development, opportunities to be active in political, economic, socio-cultural, family, and other affairs in accordance with legal regulations. The State applies various measures necessary to the protection of the rights and interests of women with disabilities in order that they may not fall victim to discrimination, violence, sexual, physical, psychological violation, or violation to their dignity.

51. The State and relevant bodies assist in the development [of women with disabilities] and creates conditions which allow them to participate in the activities of Party, State, mass, and social organizations".

52. In practical terms, the government of the Lao PDR has approved the establishment of the Lao Disabled Women's Development Center (LDWDC) to provide the vocational training and training in skills for women with disabilities coming from the various provinces of the Lao PDR. Each year, this center provides vocational training to 60 women with disabilities, some of whom go on to work at the center and some of whom are able to forge their own careers, depending on their situation. Furthermore, they also receive training in the rights of persons with disabilities and gender roles.

Article 7 — Children with Disabilities

53. The government of the Lao PDR attaches importance to the protection and promotion of the rights and development of children, becoming party to the UN CRC in 1991 before going on to appoint the NCMC to protect the rights and interests of all women and children, including children with disabilities. The Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children was created and this law covers all types of children, **Article 3** stating that "Every child shall have the following basic rights:

(a) To live a safe life and be ensured suitable physical and emotional development;

(b) To be registered at birth and given a first name and surname and to receive a nationality;

(c) To be recognized and cared for by their parents and not be separated from their parents unless such would be necessary to protect their interests;

(d) To receive health care, medical treatment, and health rehabilitation when necessary;

(e) To receive an education so that they may gain qualities, knowledge, competencies, talents, the ability to forge a career, occupational skills, and employment;

(f) To speak, express their opinions, to meet with and exchange positive experiences with other children, to participate in social, artistic, literary, and physical activities and to relax as appropriate to the age of the child;

(g) To receive and be aware of information which is suitable for their age and development level of the child and be protected from information which is dangerous for children;

(h) To be protected from physical and emotional abuse;

(i) To receive special protection from the justice system; and

(j) To receive other rights as specified by law.

54. **Article 14 of the Decree on Persons with Disabilities** states that "Children with disabilities shall have the right to receive protection of their rights and interests in accordance with legal regulations, such rights including the right to education, vocational training, care, rehabilitation, medical treatment, and access to information, on an equal basis with non-disabled children.

55. Children with disabilities shall have the right to express their opinions concerning their rights and interests on an equal basis with non-disabled children. The opinions of disabled children shall be treated as specified in the relevant legal regulations".

56. Law 34/NA, dated 26 July 2013, on Social Security states in Chapter 8 on Benefits for Family Members of Persons Eligible for Social Security in Item 2 of Article 42 that "… the birth children, adoptive children, and stepchildren under the age of 18 years. Children with disabilities or mental illness who are unable to work shall receive benefits throughout their whole lives".

57. In order to progressively bolster the protection the rights of children, the government permitted the establishment of the Association for Autism, associations to assist disabled children, foundations to provide assistance, the Intellectual Disabilities Unit, and the Center for Development and Services for Children with Mental Disabilities (Sensouk village).

Article 8 — Awareness-Raising

58. Since 2005, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MoLSW) has represented the government of the Lao PDR in collaboration with the LDPA and with support from international organizations in the implementation of projects to raise awareness of the rights and equality of disabled persons by setting up workshops, seminars, and meetings for

employees of central and local level organizations which have been attended by over 3,000 people and by creating media and publications to spread the word throughout society so that they may be aware and participate. The government also works together with the LDPA and other domestic and foreign bodies in holding conferences to broaden activities associated with disabled persons in order to discuss and exchange lessons learned and experiences together for the development of Lao disabled persons. The NCPD works together with the LDPA to organize celebrations for National Day for Persons with Disabilities, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, International Deaf and Dumb Day, World Autism Awareness Day, and the Special Olympics each year.

Article 9 — Accessibility

59. In 2009, the government of the Lao PDR issued the Law on Construction, which in the fourth paragraph of Article 5, speaks of facilities for disabled persons: "... to ensure optimum socio-economic sustainability, participation, and benefits and ensure that there are facilities for disabled and elderly persons, such as in the construction of buildings, roads, public places, and so forth".

60. **Article 28 of the Law on Construction states that "Construction operations**, such as the construction of buildings, roads, and other public places, must include facilities for disabled persons so that they may participate. Certain public places which have already been constructed need to be modified so that they have reasonable facilities".

61. **Article 30 on Access to Information of the Decree on Persons with Disabilities** states that "Disabled persons may access information via the press, electronic media, modern technology, and telecommunications services as appropriate". **Article 31 on Access to Public Places** states that "Public places must be constructed with facilities for disabled persons, such as ramps, rails, elevators, restrooms, and other tools". **Article 32 on Access to Public Transportation** states that "The mobility needs of disabled persons shall be accommodated using, for example, specially designated seats and exemptions or discounts to passenger fares and service charges in accordance with what is possible and actual circumstances".

62. The government pays great attention to improving and building facilities for disabled persons, including ramps, restrooms, rails, parking spaces, and signs giving directions to various locations in a number of cities, especially in public places such as schools, hospitals, workplaces, airports, markets, post offices, bus terminals, banks, and so forth.

63. The NCPD has been working with the LDPA to implement media publicity activities to raise funding for things such as the construction of ramps for persons restricted to wheelchairs in schools, health centers, and village halls in Phonhong, Vangvieng, and Thoulakhom districts, Vientiane Province.

64. The NCPD has also been working with the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) to implement a project in Naxaythong district, Vientiane Capital to build a barrier-free environment by making improvements and building facilities for disabled persons so that they may live normally just like other members of society.

Article 10 — Right to life

65. The Constitution states in **Article 40** that "Lao citizens have the freedom of settlement and movement as provided by the laws". **Article 42** states that "Lao citizens have the inviolable right over their body, dignity, and abode. Lao citizens may not be arrested or their abodes searched without a warrant from the Public Prosecutor or the People's Courts unless otherwise specified by law".

Article 11 — Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies

66. The government of the Lao PDR at all times respects humanitarian principles and assists its people when facing problems and disasters and this extends to disabled persons nationwide. In order to respond and provide emergency assistance in time, the government appointed the National Disaster Prevention and Control Committee (NDPCC) pursuant to Decree 220/PM, dated 28 August 2013, composed of members from the relevant ministries and sectors, as follows:

1.	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense	As President
2.	Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment	As Vice President
3.	Minister of Agriculture and Forestry	As Vice President
4.	Minister of Public Works and Transport	As Vice President
5.	Minister of Labor and Social Welfare	As Vice President
6.	Deputy Minister of Health	As ordinary member
7.	Deputy Minister of Public Security	As ordinary member
8.	President of the Lao Red Cross (LRC)	As ordinary member
9.	Deputy Secretary to the Central LPRYU Executive Committee	As ordinary member
10.	Deputy Director-General of the General Department of the Ministry of National Defense (MoND)	As ordinary member
11.	Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MoPI)	As ordinary member
12.	Chief of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)	As ordinary member
13.	Director of the Cabinet of the MoES	As ordinary member
14.	Director of the Chief of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Finance (MoF)	As ordinary member
15.	Director-General of the Mass Media Department of the Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism (MoICT)	As ordinary member

67. This committee is appointed by position, operates under the direct guidance of the government, and has the following roles, responsibilities, and scope of rights and duties:

(a) The NDPCC has the responsibility to prepare for, prevent, and control disasters and acts as a central coordination hub for nationwide disaster control;

(b) [The NDPCC] has the duty of studying and formulating plans and policies to resolve the problem of disasters better and propose these to the government;

(c) [The NDPCC] shall search for and collect information and statistical data on natural and manmade disaster victims and present the assistance needs in the case of disasters;

(d) [The NDPCC] shall mobilize technical, financial, and material assistance from all classes of people, all sectors, and domestic and foreign organizations for use in disaster control;

(e) [The NDPCC] shall publicize and provide training throughout society so that people understand about disasters in order to prevent dangers and control disasters better

and conduct studies in order to provide content on disaster control and environmental protection to be included in school textbooks;

(f) [The NDPCC] has the duty of leading all rescue and relief operations and projects associated with preparations to combat and respond to the harm [caused by disasters] and to provide rehabilitation following disasters to restore normal conditions using State funding combined with aid from State organizations, international organizations, NGOs, and private sector organizations operating in the Lao PDR and report to the government on a regular basis;

(g) [The NDPCC] shall coordinate with and support provincial governors for the appointment of Disaster Prevention and Control Committees and provincial and district levels so that they may assist in improving assistance capacities within these units.

Article 12 — Equal recognition before the law

68. The Lao PDR has a policy to build a State of law and ensure case proceedings. The relevant bodies apply suitable measures to ensure equal rights among the Lao people before the law and before the courts as specified in the Constitution and laws. The right to fair case proceedings is guaranteed in the judicial system pursuant to the relevant laws, such as the Law on Criminal Procedure and the Law on Civil Procedure. **Article 35 of the Constitution** states that "Lao citizens are all equal before the law irrespective of their gender, social status, education, beliefs and ethnic group". **Article 37** states that "Citizens of both genders enjoy equal rights in the political, economic, cultural and social fields and in family affairs". **Article 38** states that "Lao citizens have the right to receive education and advance themselves". **Article 39** states that "Lao citizens have the right to work and engage in occupations which are not contrary to the laws. Working people have the right to rest, to receive medical treatment in times of illness, and to receive assistance in the event that they become unable to work, disabled, or elderly, and in other cases as specified by law". **Article 15 of the Decree on Persons with Disabilities** specifies the right to file complaints, stating that "Disabled persons have the right to present or file complaints and requests for justice with the relevant bodies in order that these bodies may consider whether or not their rights have been violated so that they may receive justice. In dealing with such complaints, these bodies shall facilitate matters, provide assistance, and ensure justice for disabled persons on an equal basis with non-disabled persons".

Article 13 — Access to justice

69. The government works together with the LDPA to organize training and seminars for officials of the courts and other relevant bodies concerning the right of disabled persons to access the justice system so that they may be aware of and understand procedures for assisting disabled persons in the event of a problem or complaint filed with the justice system and these have been attended by 78 people (45 women).

Article 14-Liberty and security of person

70. **Article 42 of the Constitution** states that "Lao citizens have the inviolable right over their body, dignity, and abode. Lao citizens may not be arrested or their abodes searched without a warrant from the Public Prosecutor or the People's Courts unless otherwise specified by law". **Article 40** states that "Lao citizens have the freedom of settlement and movement as provided by the laws".

Article 15 — Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment

71. In the legal framework of the Lao PDR, torture constitutes an illegal act. The use of torture and illegal methods and actions upon suspects or prisoners is a criminal offence.

According to the Law on Criminal Procedure, during the investigation and interrogation of a suspect, defendant, or other individual participating in a case, officials are prohibited from using violence, coercion, threats, beatings, or other illegal methods. The Penal Law specifies that the aim of punishing offenders is to reeducate them and transform them into good people rather than to torture them.

72. The Lao government has protected, managed, educated, and trained Lao non-disabled and disabled persons to have respect for the legal regulations of the Lao PDR in accordance with the obligations and duties of Lao citizens specified in the Constitution. Following this education and training, disabled and non-disabled persons have a high level of respect for legal regulations.

Article 16 — Freedom from exploitation, violence, and abuse

73. Lao people are compassionate and assist one another. Local authorities and families assist and do their best to look after disabled persons under their responsibility and eliminate domestic violence. Accordingly, **Article 29 of the Law on the Development and Protection of Women** states that "*Domestic violence against women and children* refers to an action or neglect on the part of an individual in a given family which has a negative physical or emotional impact on a woman or child of that family or on their belongings".

Article 17 — Protecting the integrity of the person

74. All disabled persons have the right for their physical, psychological, or intellectual disability to be respected on an equal basis with others. Article 42 of the Constitution states that "Lao citizens have the inviolable right over their body, dignity, and abode. Lao citizens may not be arrested or their abodes searched without a warrant from the Public Prosecutor or the People's Courts unless otherwise specified by law". Following enforcement of the relevant laws, we no longer see instances of violations of the dignity of disabled persons, especially instances where they are looked down upon, discriminated against, imprisoned or restricted to a given area, or their dignity trampled upon.

Article 18 — Liberty of movement and nationality

75. **Article 2 of Law** 05/NA, dated 17 May 2004, **on Lao Nationality** states that "*Lao nationality* refers to a binding political and legal relationship between and individual with the State of the Lao PDR whereby the Lao citizen has rights and obligations to the State of the Lao PDR and vice versa". **Article 9** states that "Lao nationality is acquired from birth, naturalization, re-acquisition of former Lao nationality, and other bases". **Article 11 on the Nationality of Children Where One of the Parents Is a Lao Citizen** states that "If one of the parents is a Lao citizen, children shall be considered Lao citizens by birth if: (1) They are born within the territory of the Lao PDR; and/or (2) They are born outside the territory of the Lao PDR but one of both parents has at that time a permanent address within the territory of the Lao PDR. In the event that a child is born outside the territory of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and both parents have permanent addresses outside the territory of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, their nationality shall be decided by their parents. In the event that one of the parents is a Lao citizen and the other parent is a stateless person, the child will be considered a Lao citizen by birth without taking their place of birth into consideration."

76. Lao citizens of all ethnicities have freedom of movement and settlement within the territory of the Lao PDR. **Article 40 of the Constitution** states that "Lao citizens have the freedom of settlement and movement as provided by the laws". Pursuant to this provision, Lao citizens have the freedom of movement without restriction or barriers. The people are able to select a locality in which to live within the territory of the country in order to build a livelihood.

77. Following the enforcement of the relevant laws in practice, there have yet to be any cases where the right to movement and to possess travel documents has been restricted.

Children with disabilities have the right to Lao nationality and to change their nationality in accordance with legal regulations.

Article 19 — Living independently and being included in the community

78. **Article 40 of the Constitution** states that "Lao citizens have the freedom of settlement and movement as provided by the laws". Pursuant to this provision, Lao citizens have the freedom of movement without restriction or barriers. The people are able to select a locality in which to live within the territory of the country in order to build a livelihood.

79. The government of the Lao PDR implements a policy for the creation of *development villages* and *village clusters*, allocating housing for the public. The government organizes the relocation of the public from remote mountainous areas where people live spread out into newly established villages, also providing infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, farmlands, roads, electricity, clean water, and markets for goods to be exchanged. The relocation policy of the government for the people is focused on creating conditions to facilitate stable livelihoods for the multiethnic people whereby they may have more convenient access to education and medical treatment. The project for the relocation of the public from mountainous areas to the plateaus is being implemented pursuant to Decree 07/PM, dated 9 April 2004, of the Prime Minister.

Article 20 — Personal mobility

80. All Lao citizens may travel within the country and overseas independently as stated in **Chapter IV of the Constitution of the Lao PDR on the Fundamental Rights and Obligations of Citizens**.

81. The government delegates the task of producing and providing prosthetic and assistive devices and for disabled persons to the Center of Medical Rehabilitation (CMR), the 686 Prosthetic Device Factory (Keun village), and provincial rehabilitation centers. Between the years of 2007 and 2012, 718 prosthetic devices and 395 assistive devices were provided, 759 wheelchairs were produced, and 4,532 wheelchairs for disabled persons were provided to enable the mobility of disabled persons nationwide using government funding and foreign cooperation. This has enabled the mobility of disabled persons and these have been used as vehicles for people to use for work.

82. Training has been provided on the assembly and use of wheelchairs on 26 occasions and on the use of crutches (O and M) on 3 occasions.

Article 21 — Freedom of expression and opinion and access to information

83. Disabled persons have freedom of expression and opinion based on the legal regulations of the nation. **Article 44 of the Constitution of the Lao PDR** states that "Lao citizens have the right and freedom of speech, press and assembly and have the right to set up associations and to stage demonstrations which are not contrary to the laws".

84. Lao people, including disabled persons, have the right and freedom of expression and opinion and to express openly their opinions on the implementation of the socio-economic development plans for each period via a hotline when the NA is in session.

85. The media and press have been improved in terms of both quantity and quality and there are many more columns and pages containing a diverse range of content. Services, such as advertising, business services, and other services have been opened up for the public and there are currently 123 newspapers, magazines, and journals in the Lao PDR (compared with just 13 in 1993). These include private sector magazines and daily newspapers distributed domestically and overseas. There are 57 radio stations, covering 90% of the country, and 36 television stations, covering 80%. Furthermore, the rural

population is able to receive content via domestic and foreign satellite broadcasts. In urban areas, the public has access to cable television, which increases the content and quality of information. These media have not only been improved in terms of content but also technologically. Digital systems have, for example, been taking over from analog systems. The internet represents a new form of information technology and is expanding rapidly and broadly throughout the country, increasing public access to information.

86. In 2008, the government of the Lao PDR issued the Law on Media and although this law makes no mention of disability, it acknowledges that 'all Lao citizens' refer to all Lao persons in the territory of Laos.

87. The government of the Lao PDR facilitates matters for and approves the implementation of projects by the LDPA, especially with support from international organizations. Between the years of 2008 and 2010 a radio program ran called "Friends of the Disabled" but that has since closed due to a lack of funding. Since 2008, there has been a television program for disabled persons and this program is broadcast nationwide (on LTV 1) on the first Thursday of every month from 9.30-10.00am. The LDPA also produces quarterly newsletters, posters, leaflets, and a website to ensure that information on disabled persons is able reach its members in the provinces.

88. The NCPD facilitates matters for the LDPA to implement projects to raise public awareness and these involve training on the rights and equality of disabled persons and training on mass media and disability for journalists and on the use of basic and advanced sign language for State sector workers involved in the provision of services so that they be aware of, understand, and participate more in the publicity of the rights of disabled persons among the public and among disabled persons themselves so that they may feel confident in participating in society and in expressing their opinions based on the rights they hold and the legislation in which these rights are enshrined.

Article 22 — Respect for privacy

89. Lao citizens are guaranteed the right not to be physically violated by any person. This right is guaranteed by the Constitution and the law. **Article 2 of the Constitution** states that "The State of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is a state of the people, by the people, and for the benefit of the multiethnic people, composed of all social strata with the workers, farmers, and intelligentsia forming the key components". **Article 6** states that "The State protects the inviolable freedom and democratic rights of the people. All state organizations and government officials shall disseminate and raise awareness of all policies, regulations and laws among the people and, together with the people, organize their implementation in order to guarantee the legitimate rights and interests of the people. All acts of bureaucratism and harassment detrimental to the people's dignity, physical wellbeing, lives, emotional wellbeing, and property are prohibited".

90. **Article 5 on the Non-Violation of Civil Rights and Freedoms of the Law on Criminal Procedure** states that "Persons may not be arrested, detained, or their abodes searched without a warrant from the Public Prosecutor or the People's Courts except in cases where an offence is witnessed in person or in emergency circumstances. In the event of illegal arrest and/or detention or detention which exceeds the period specified by law or verdict of the People's Courts, the Public Prosecutor shall issue a release order forthwith. Any individual arresting, detaining, searching the abode or person of an individual illegally shall be prosecuted and held criminally liable".

Article 23 — Respect for the home and the family

91. **Article 42 of the Constitution** states that states that "Lao citizens have the inviolable right over their body, dignity, and abode. Lao citizens may not be arrested or their abodes searched without a warrant from the Public Prosecutor or the People's Courts unless otherwise specified by law".

92. In order to ensure the elimination of discrimination against disabled persons in all affairs relating to marriage, family, parenthood, and relations on the basis of equality with others, **Article 13** on Equality in Family Affairs **of the Law on Family** states that "The State and society promote gender equity in families and for women and men to have equal rights in all aspects relating to family relations. Women aged eighteen years and older shall have the right to choose a partner with whom to build a family. Wives shall have the right to take on the surname of their husband or maintain their original surname. Wives shall have equal rights with their husbands over marital property. Husbands and wives shall have equal rights in discussing, agreeing upon, and resolving issues within their families concerning the selection of a place to live, employment, having children, and so forth. Husbands and wives shall love, respect, and assist one another, look after and teach their children, and together build their family into a family of culture full of solidarity, happiness, and advancement." **Article 9 on Conditions for Marriage** states that "Men and women have the right to marry at eighteen years of age. In special and necessary cases, this limit may be lowered to less than eighteen years of age but not less than fifteen years of age. Marriage must be based on mutual consent from both sides without coercion from any side or individual".

Article 24 — Education

93. The right held by Lao people to an education without racial or ethnic discrimination is guaranteed by the Constitution. Article 22 of the version of the Constitution which was amended in 2003 states that "The State pays close attention to the implementation of education development policies and the compulsory primary education system in order to build Lao people into good citizens with revolutionary ethics, knowledge, and skills. The State also pays great attention to national education development to achieve quality and create opportunities and favorable conditions for all people to receive an education, especially those residing in remote areas, ethnic groups, women, children, and the disadvantaged. The State promotes private sector investment in the development of national education".

94. Article 38 of the Constitution states that "Lao citizens have the right to receive an education and improve themselves". The Law on Education, Article 6 specifies the right of Lao citizens to an education, stating that "All Lao citizens, without discrimination by ethnicity, race, religion, gender, age, or socio-economic status, have the right to receive and education". Article 25 on the Establishment of Special Schools for Disabled Persons states that "The State sets up special schools for disabled persons who are unable study alongside normal learners. The State promotes assistance and support from the private sector and from domestic and foreign social organizations in terms of funding, equipment, and so forth to contribute the establishment of these schools". Article 35 on Equality among Students states that "All learners have equal rights with respect to education, learning, research, advancement, and schools, centers, and educational institutes of all levels and all education organizations must ensure that the principles of equal rights for learners are upheld with respect to factors such as gender, ethnicity, and disability". Article 36 on Allowances and Assistance for Learners states that "The State has a system to provide allowances to students of poor families and disadvantaged students, especially girls, ethnic groups, and talented and strong students, and promotes the provision of appropriate forms of assistance by individuals, organizations, and society to such students". Article 22 on Inclusive Education for Disabled Persons of the Decree on Persons with Disabilities states in Item 2 that "Education institutes shall have all the necessary facilities for disabled persons, such as suitable classrooms, learning areas, and courses". A 5-year national Inclusive Education policy and 5-year strategic plan have also been created for 2011-2015 and 2016-2020 respectively along with a plan of action for each period.

95. Of the 3,829 primary schools across the 137 districts and 17 provinces, 409 are inclusive education schools which cater to both disabled and non-disabled students and 3 are special schools and 4,500 disabled children are enrolled.

96. Together with this, training is also provided to teachers teaching disabled children so that they may be familiar with the learning and teaching methods, especially sign language

and Braille. Training is also provided to administrative workers and is attended by a number of teachers and administrative workers together.

97. The Lao government pays great attention to improving and using suitable curricula, especially for the learning and teaching of Braille for students with eye disabilities and sign language for deaf-mute students and over recent years, 62 students (24 girls) with eye disabilities and 171 deaf students (69 girls) have been enrolled and there are 29 teachers, (23 women).

98. The government is supporting the LDPA to create a program to translate Lao language into Braille and this is expected to be announced as being ready for use in 2015.

Article 25 — Health

99. [Health is provided for in] the provisions of the Constitution and the Law on Hygiene, Disease Prevention, and Health Promotion, especially in Article 3 of the Law on Hygiene, Disease Prevention, and Health Promotion, which states that "All citizens, regardless of ethnic origin, gender, age, or socio-economic status, have the right of access to health services, and have the obligation to care for personal, family, social and national health, and to contribute to hygiene, disease prevention and health promotion". **Article 17 on Health Care for Disabled Persons of the Decree on Persons with Disabilities** states that "[Disabled persons] shall receive preventive services, checkups, treatment, and rehabilitation in hospitals, health centers, disease testing rooms, and other facilities and this shall include disabled persons who are poor, homeless, and/or unable to help themselves and lack someone to take care of them as specified in specific regulations".

Article 26 — Habilitation and rehabilitation

100. Article 18 on Rehabilitation of the Decree on Persons with Disabilities states that "[Disabled persons] shall receive rehabilitation, physiotherapy, plastic surgery, equipment, assistive devices, and assistive devices according to medical principles. The costs for the rehabilitation, physiotherapy, equipment, and assistive devices of disabled persons who are poor, homeless, and/or are unable to help themselves and have nobody to look after them are specified for in specific regulations. Disabled persons and their families residing in rural and remote areas must receive information concerning rehabilitation centers and centers which provide assistance in terms of equipment, assistive devices, assistive devices, and rehabilitation for disabled persons. Coordination must take place between rehabilitation at hospitals, specific medical centers, and rehabilitation at community level and from the families of disabled persons".

101. The government pays great attention to rehabilitation, habilitation, and physiotherapy for disabled persons, using hospitals of various levels as places for rehabilitation and physiotherapy. Four rehabilitation centers have been built in the cities of Luang Prabang, Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet, and Champasak in order to cater to the needs of disabled persons. Medical personnel have also received training and use a certain amount of modern equipment to help with rehabilitation. Following implementation, 41,295 disabled persons have used these services and/or received rehabilitation, allowing them to gradually improve their psychological and physical condition. Furthermore, the government has produced and provided assistive devices to disabled persons who are unable to help themselves in their daily lives and work. Included in this, 2,750 disabled persons have received wheelchairs, 536 have received wheelchairs, 4,950 have received prosthetic limbs, 656 have received walking sticks, 176 have received hearing aids, and 200 have received spectacles.

Article 27 — Work and employment

102. The second paragraph of **Article 4** of the Law on Labor (amended in 2013) states that "The State promotes the poor, the disadvantaged, disabled persons, the unemployed, and persons who have social problems to receive occupational skills development and

access to job finding services in order that they may have employment, earn an income, and receive justice with a focus on reducing poverty. **Article 9, Chapter 1, Part II** specifies the target groups for occupational skills development in Item (1): "Disadvantaged persons, poor people, and the disabled…". **Article 33, Chapter 2, Part II** lists the components involved with creating opportunities for employment in Item (1): "Promotion of independent work, working in one's own village and working from home, and the hiring of disadvantaged persons, women, disabled persons, and elderly persons". Article 68 on the Hiring of Foreign Workers states that "Employers have the duty of creating a plan for the labor needs of their business, giving priority to Lao workers above foreigners".

103. On 30 April 2009, the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare issued Notice 1450/LSW on Raising the Minimum Wage from **348**,000 kip to **626**,000 Kip and in 2014, a proposal was made to the government for approval to raise the minimum wage from 626,000 kip to 900,000 kip.

104. The government pays great attention to vocational training for disabled persons so that those for whom it is possible may receive such training. This is being done through the building of vocational training centers especially for disabled persons and making practical and curricular improvements to general training centers so that they are suitable for disabled persons. Since the implementation of this policy, disabled persons have been studying in various fields, such as computer studies, accounting, electrical appliance repair, bicycle repair, and a number of independent vocations, including livestock raising, haircutting, cosmetology, weaving, and so forth, and this training has been provided to over 1,100 disabled persons.

105. In addition to legislation, in practice, the Lao government also encourages employers to hire disabled persons through the creation of projects for employment in the major cities. Following the implementation of these projects, employers have gained an understanding into the circumstances, needs, and capabilities of disabled persons and 700 disabled persons (200 women) are now employed with a further 230 running their own businesses.

106. The Lao government facilitates matters for and permits the LDPA to implement projects, especially with support from international organizations, and between 2009 and 2014, promoted employment through a project which connected employers up with disabled workers and 42 disabled persons are now employed in private companies.

107. Furthermore, between 2010 and 2013, the LDPA also implemented a project to improve the foundations for living for disabled people in communities by providing vocational training and training in the management and administration of small businesses and 136 disabled persons in three districts of Vientiane Capital received assistance.

Article 28 — Adequate standard of living and social protection

108. The government attaches importance to the elimination of poverty among the multiethnic people and this includes poor and socially disadvantaged families. The government created the NGPES for up until 2015 along with poverty reduction goals, aiming for its complete elimination between 2015 and 2020. The government has also created comprehensive rural development plans and created the Law on the Protection and Development of Women, the National Nutrition Policy, and the Report on Projects for Cooperation on Nutrition. The NGPES targets 39 poor districts across the country. Following implementation, poverty has been reduced from 45% in 2011 to 27% in 2012 and is expected to fall to no more than 10% in 2015.

Article 29 — Participation in political and public life

109. **Article 10 on the Decree on Persons with Disabilities** states that "Disabled persons have equal rights in political affairs, such as the right to vote in elections, to stand for election, to participate in activities, to discuss and agree upon important national issues,

and to be appointed to positions of various levels in Party and State organizations, the LFNC, mass organizations, and social organizations as appropriate".

110. Organizations representing disabled persons got together and expressed sector-specific opinions at government round table meeting (RTM), at which important issues were discussed concerning the monitoring and reassessment of the targets and indicators for the MDGs. Discussions, procedures, and meetings have taken place to create various policies and legislation, such as the Decree on Persons with Disabilities, the amendment of the Law on Education, the Law on Construction, the Law on Land Transport, the Law on Labor, the National Strategy and Plan of Action on Inclusive Education, and other relevant legislation.

Article 30 — Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport

111. Pursuant to Article 37 of the Constitution, Lao citizens enjoy equal rights in the political, economic, cultural and social fields and in family affairs. Article 8 states that "Lao citizens have the right and freedom to create artistic and literary works and to engage in cultural activities which are not contrary to the laws". Article 8 states that "All ethnic groups have the right to preserve and expand their own fine traditional customs and cultures and those of the nation".

112. The government of the Lao PDR has a clear policy concerning culture which focuses on promoting cultural development in order to build Lao people into a society with a civilized mindset. Under this policy, the government pays great attention to preserving the priceless cultures of the ethnic groups in Laos along with their priceless cultural heritage. Special emphasis is placed on promoting arts, literature, handicrafts, weaving, pottery, sculpture, painting, and the crafting of silver and gold items which are unique to the nation. Our art products are famous and exported overseas. Ancient and historical sites and artifacts are restored and preserved nationwide.

113. In the Lao PDR, all the above mentioned places and services are open to the general public without discrimination by race or ethnicity and there are no regulations in place forbidding certain races or ethnicities from entering these places. The multiethnic people have equal rights in traveling to and accessing them.

114. The government pays great attention to and promotes arts, music, and sports for disabled persons and has set up committees for the Paralympics and Special Olympics. It also trains up coaches and volunteers during each period. National games have been set up in Luang Prabang, Savannakhet, and Vientiane province and these games are set up in association with the National Games. These are aimed at promoting public awareness and understanding into the capabilities of disabled persons and a universally inclusive society. We also compete regionally and internationally. These sports build a reputation for the Lao PDR on a regional and international level. As for arts and music, a range of activities take place, such as painting, dance, and singing at various social events and especially, during the celebrations for National Day for Persons with Disabilities, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and the various national festivals each year.

Article 31 — Statistics and data collection

115. The government pays great attention and attaches much importance to statistics, which is an area of work which relates to socio-economic development, issuing Law 03/NA, dated 10 June 2011, Article 4 of which specifies State policy on statistics, stating that "The State promotes statistics through the specification of policies, legal regulations, and systems to organize statistics, the training of and allocation of human resources, and the provision of budgets to implement strategies and programs for statistics during each period with a focus on ensuring the sustainability of this work. The State encourages domestic and foreign individuals, legal entities, and organizations to contribute to statistics work by providing data, academic services, and funding.

116. The government started to collect statistics on disabled persons using the 2005 Population and Housing Census and found that 56,727 people (22,051 women) had a disability, 21,871 with a limb or bodily disability, 9,261 with an eyesight disability, 14,938 with a hearing and/or speaking disability, 4,127 with multiple disabilities, and 5,954 with other types of disabilities with a further 576 refusing to disclose their disability.

117. The MoLSW set up the Statistics Division to function as a place to store data on labor and social welfare, including statistics on disabled persons nationwide and also as a tool to coordinate with the Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB) to conduct research and provide reference for improving and creating legislation for each period, including legislation concerning disabled persons and removing barriers to their participation and happiness in society.

118. In order to ensure that statistics are clear, the NCPD worked together with the LDPA with support from international organizations to implement a project to collect statistical data on disabled persons in 10 provinces and Vientiane Capital and data was collected on 19,393 disabled persons (9,116 women).

119. The MoLSW, the NCPD, the LDPA, disabled people's organizations (DPOs), and NGOs have discussed the possibility of using the questionnaire developed by a group in Washington DC for the upcoming 2015 Population and Housing Census.

Article 32 — International cooperation

120. The State pays great attention to promoting international cooperation for the implementation of global, regional, and ASEAN strategies for disabled persons and makes great efforts in its participation in bilateral and multilateral seminars to exchange ideas and lessons learned on disabled persons. It also cooperates with embassies and international organizations for the implementation of various projects, such as the Project to Protect and Promote the Rights of Disabled Persons, the Project for Improving Access to Education for Children with Disabilities, the Project to Give Disabled Persons Employment Opportunities, the Project to Build Roles and Skills for Disabled People by Providing Training for Women with Disabilities, the Participatory Project to Make Socio-Economic Improvements for Disabled Persons, the Project to Improve the Lives and Wellbeing of Disabled Persons and Their Families, the Project for the Socio-Economic Rehabilitation of War Victims (disabled persons), the Project to Strengthen the Lao Association of the Blind (LAB), the Wheelchair Distribution Project, and more besides.

Article 33 — National implementation and monitoring

121. The NCPD was established pursuant to Prime Minister's Decree 061/PM, dated 6 March 2009, and improved pursuant to Decree 232/PM, dated 6 September 2013 on the Organization and Operations of the National Commission for People with Disabilities and the Elderly, which specified the following duties for the National Committee for People with Disabilities and the Elderly (NCPDE):

(a) To study and adopt State policies issued as legal regulations, strategies, plans, programs, and projects to protect, promote, assist, rehabilitate, and develop disabled and elderly persons so that they have a high quality of life;

(b) To study and propose to the government specifications and measures for the protection, promotion, rehabilitation, physiotherapy, assistance, and development of disabled and elderly persons from central through to local grassroots levels;

(c) To study conventions, agreements, protocols, declarations, and other international documents which relate to disabled and elderly persons and propose these to the government for consideration, approval, ratification, and becoming party to or for withdrawal;

(d) To coordinate with the relevant State and private sectors for the performance of conventions, agreements, protocols, declarations, and other international documents related to disabled and elderly persons which have been approved by the State;

(e) To monitor, inspect, support, and advise the relevant State and private sector bodies at central and local level for the implementation of policies and legal regulations to protect the legitimate rights and interests of disabled and elderly persons;

(f) To publicize and disseminate the relevant domestic and foreign policies and legal regulations among State and private sector bodies and the general public to raise awareness and understanding and so that they participate in the implementation of these legal regulations and the assistance for and development of disabled and elderly persons;

(g) To raise funding and material assistance for relief to help and develop disabled and elderly persons in various ways;

(h) To organize the celebrations for International Day of Persons with Disabilities and International Day of Older Persons in order to raise public awareness and understanding into the roles and importance disabled and elderly persons have in national socio-economic development;

(i) To coordinate with the MoPI (LSB) and other relevant bodies in conducting surveys to gather statistical data on disabled and elderly persons nationwide and provide this data State and private sector bodies wishing to use it;

(j) To study and certify requests for the establishment of associations, foundations, funds, and other organizations associated with disabled and elderly persons;

(k) To manage and facilitate matters for associations, foundations, funds and other organizations in their operations which relate to disabled and/or elderly persons to ensure they are consistent with the specified policies and legal regulations;

(l) To liaise and cooperate with allied countries, international organizations, and NGOs in the region and the world to secure technical, specialist, and financial cooperation and assistance for the development of disabled and elderly persons;

(m) To attend domestic and overseas meetings, seminars, and training concerning disabled and elderly persons within the scope of its roles and responsibilities;

(n) To summarize and report on CRPD performance every two and four years to the government in order that it may report to the UN in accordance with the regulations;

(o) To create annual plans for use in its operations;

(p) To create monthly, quarterly, biannual, and annual action plans and lead the performance of its duties and activities effectively;

(q) To summarize and report on its activities to the government on a regular basis; and

(r) To perform other tasks as assigned by the government.

122. **The personnel structure at central level is composed of 19 persons**, the President being the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for guiding socio-cultural affairs, the Vice President and Acting President being the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare, the three other Vice Presidents being the Deputy Minister of Health, the Deputy Minister of Education and Sports, and the LRC President. The Director-General of the MoLSW Department of Pensions, Invalids, and Handicaps functions both as ordinary member and as head of the Secretariat. The Commission also includes heads of offices from various relevant ministries such as the MoND, the Ministry of Public Security (MoPS), the MoPI, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the MoFA, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MoPWT), the MoICT, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), the MoF, the Veterans' Association, the Central LWU, the Central LRYU, and the Central LFTU.

Personnel structure and local level

- The President, Vice Presidents, and ordinary members of Provincial Committees for People with Disabilities (PCPDs) are appointed to the Provincial or City Governor based on the real circumstances of their locality and consistently with the central level personnel structure.
- The President, Vice Presidents, and ordinary members of District Committees for People with Disabilities (DCPDs) are appointed by the District or Municipal (if one exists) Governor based on the real circumstances of their locality and consistently with the provincial level personnel structure.

123. The Secretariats of the Committees for People with Disabilities and the Elderly (CPDE(s) take a leading role in assisting with the work of their respective CPDEs and appoint coordinators for disabled persons to be stationed at the relevant ministries.

124. The State offers the opportunity to social organizations to participate in the process of writing this National Report.